



**NDA**

National  
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Agency



## **LAST HOPE RECYCLING COOPERATIVE**

### **CLOSE – OUT EVALUATION REPORT**

**MAY 2014**





Prepared By:

**Talent Net Consulting**

'a new dawn for talent'

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## Executive Summary

Last Hope Recycling LTD is a recycling co-operative established and registered in 2008 by five previously disadvantaged Upington community members. The project is funded by NDA and Department of Social Development. The project is situated in the industrial site of Upington, a land and building that was financed by Department of Social Development. The project was established as an income generating co-operative aiming to be viable and sustainable enterprise reducing unemployment for the communities of Windsorton, Pabalelo, Dakota and Rosedale.

According to the review the project has been very sustainable and has not made significant profit compared to the successful profit made three years before registration as a co-operative. The last recorded increase in sales of 43% between was in 2009/ 2010 financial years. The Co-operative recycles and trades ferrous and non-ferrous metals. The scraps are bought from the local communities at a price per kilogram. The scrap is then weighed, sorted, compressed and sold locally to Upington recycling companies and nationally in Klerksdorp, North West Province and Cape Town, Western Cape Province, respectively.

The co-operative has diversified into plastic and glass collection with the aim of growing the business but this expansion has not been entirely successful.

As part of the business objective the following are part of the deliverables:

1. To promote job creation through the procurement of scrap materials from the community;
2. To promote recycling in the community as a means to earn an income;
3. To create a sustainable business enterprise.

The project is currently operational, having received their co-operative certificates in November 2008.

Challenges facing the project however are:

- The interpersonal relationships between the members;
- Lack of a 32 ton truck to transport scraps to far afield;
- Maintenance of the weigh bridge and small truck;
- Increasing competition in the recycling business;
- Improving the projects visibility in the community and beyond;
- Improving operations to ensure reduction in input costs and optimising systems.

The approved funding from NDA was R 540 600.00 which was paid in 3 tranches and there is no outstanding payment due to the co-operative.

Long term sustainability issues for the projects would relate to good operational management of the businesses and containing input costs, such as electricity. It is recommended that the co-operatives actively seek to distribute their products through different distribution channels and consider diversifying their products, for example, plastic, glass, papers and if necessary secure funds to buy a 32 ton truck. Despite the relationship difficulties, the project has been able to make a profit and when these challenges are addressed the project will serve as an ideal training centre to provide recycling and business skills to the community.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation	Word or Term
NC	Northern Cape
IT	Information Technology
LM	Local Municipality
NDA	National Development Agency
NPO	Non-profit organisation
SEFA	Small Enterprise Funding Agency
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa

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## **Section 1: Performance Assessment of Project**

### **1. Background of the Project**

#### **1.1 Project Description**

Last Hope Recycling LTD is a recycling co-operative established in 2008 by five previously disadvantaged Upington community members. The project was initially operating as an NPO until 2008 when it was converted and re-registered as an income generating co-operative, aiming to be a viable and sustainable enterprise reducing unemployment in the communities of Windsorton, Pabalelo, Dakota and Rosedale

The project is situated in the industrial area of Upington. The land and building was financed by Department of Social Development, as part of their mandate to develop organisations to provide productive opportunities in areas that have high unemployment.

The Co-operative is currently funded by the NDA and Department of Social Development.

At the time of registration, the project facility was lacking proper recycling infrastructure and equipment, such as weighing scales where large volumes of scrap metal could be weighed. The Department of Environmental Affairs assisted the Co-operative with the weighing scale, which currently needs ongoing service and maintenance.

The overall objective of this project is to promote local job creation through the trading of recycled materials with the aim to:

- Promote job creation through the procurement of scrap materials from the community.
- Promote recycling in the community as a means to earn an income.
- Create a sustainable business enterprise.

The Co-operative, in its endeavours to expand the project beyond steel and metal recycling has embarked on projects related to the following:

- Recycling of paper;
- Recycling of plastic;
- Recycling of glass.

This expansion of the business to other recyclable materials has not been entirely successful.

#### **1.2 Site Visits and Monitoring**

The project is regularly visited by the NDA NC and the last monitoring report was undertaken prior to the release of the last tranche of support from the NDA. For this evaluation, the site was visited in May 2014.

Meetings took place with the project managers and some of the beneficiaries of the project. These meetings were followed up with telephonic interviews with both the project management office and the NDA NC.

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## 2. Structure of the Project

The project is designed to be a co-operative in line with the South African Co-operatives Act. The project was registered by a total number of 5 founders, three men, one whom is disabled and two women. One member has since passed away. The direct beneficiaries of the project were unemployed people and there were no identified youth during the co-operative registration.

The table below illustrate the current structure:

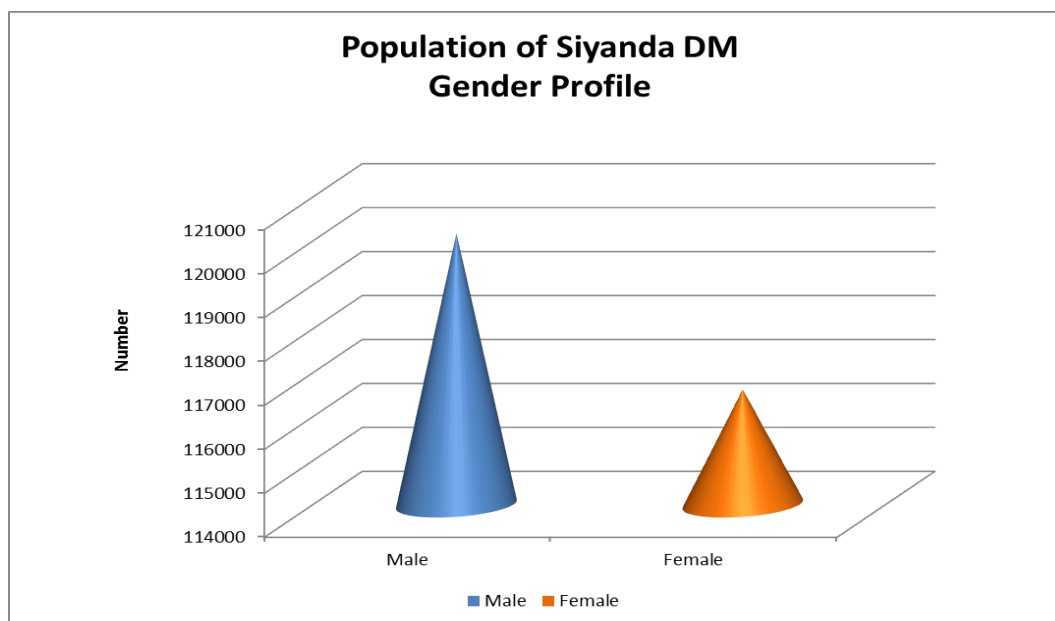
**Table 1: List of members of the Co-operative and the Management Team**

Last Hope Recycling Co-operative		
No	Name	Role
1	Ms Diana Hangowe	Chairperson
2	Mr Themba Job	Project CEO
3	Mr Sindile Ntlangiso (disabled)	Treasurer
4	Mr Martin Louw	Member
5	Mr Paul Pauls	Member
6	Ms Evaline Gunda	Secretary
Project Management Office		
No	Name	Role
1	Themba Job	Project Manager/CEO
2	Eveline Gunda	Project Coordinator and HR
3	Hester Hanhome	Administrator
4	Diana Hangowe	Finance and Administration
5	Sindile Ntlangiso	Marketing, IT and report writing
6		Driver
7		Casual (sorter)
8		Casual (sorter)

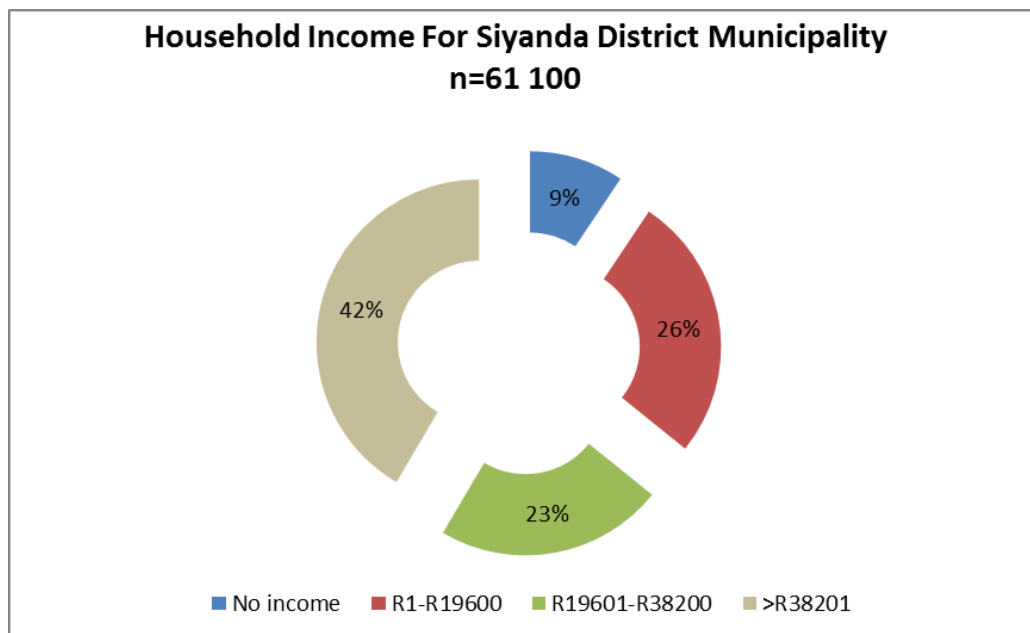
### 2.1 Relevance of the Project

The relevance of the project is described in relation to the demographic statistics.

**Figure 1: Population of Siyanda DM**

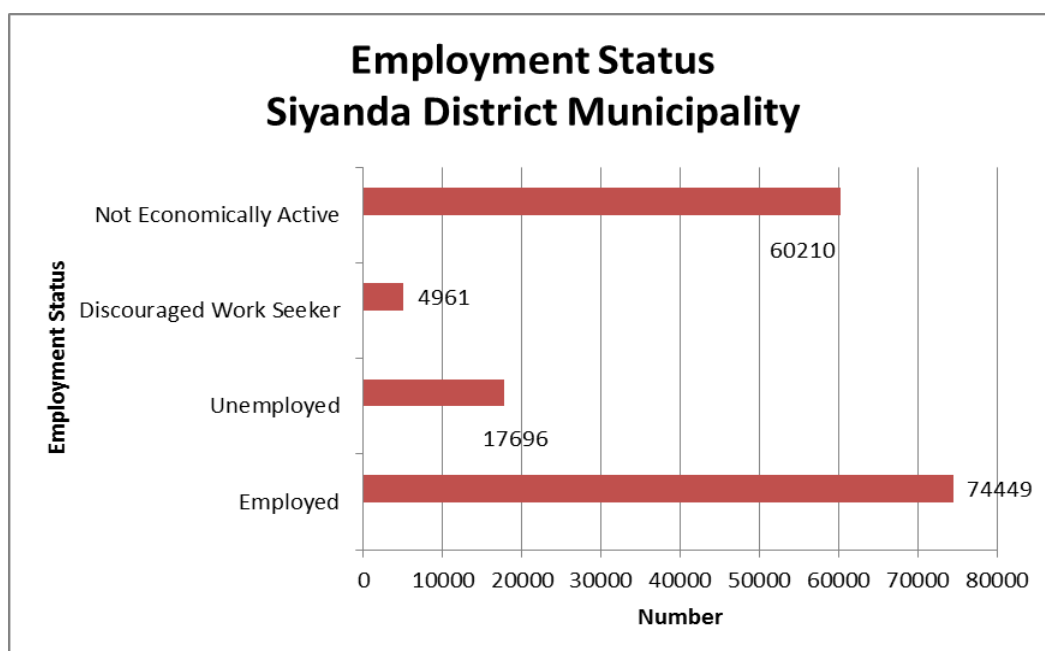


**Figure 2: Distribution of Household Income in Siyanda DM**



The number of people in the Siyanda DM is in the order of 236 783 people, with the split being 50.7% male and 49.3% female. The number of households in the DM is 61 100 giving an average household size of approximately 3,88 people per household.

**Figure 3: Employment Status of Population in Siyanda DM**



Currently the unemployment rate in the DM is in the order of 21.3% with about 6% of the people that could be employed being discouraged work seekers. The wide employment rate is therefore in the order of 27.3% for the DM.

The project has relevance in that it allows anybody to be a beneficiary of the project, as long as they are willing to participate in the process of recycling waste materials legally.

## **2.2 Project preparation and design**

The project was set up by the Co-operative and funded by the NDA and Social Development. The project is established and managed through a centralised project management office and managed by the founding members of the Co-operative. The following partners have contributed collectively to the design, implementation and capacity building and financial resourcing of the Co-operative:

SEDA, DTI, DSD, Buyisa E- Bag, NDA, Environment and Conservation Department, Siyanda District Municipality.

The table below provides the overview of the project beneficiaries as envisaged in the project feasibility study:

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**Table 2: Overview of project beneficiaries**

Total no. of beneficiaries		Direct		Indirect		Number of people with disabilities		Number of Volunteers		
M	F	M	F	M	F	F	M	F	M	F
4955	2147	6	4	4951	2145	0	1	0	0	0
7106		10		7096		1		0		

As part of developing the capacity, training was provided in good governance, financial management and project management. This training was done in conjunction with the Independent Development Trust (IDT). The project firstly focused on the development of institutional capacity and providing adequate training to the beneficiaries for the implementation of the projects. Despite some of the challenges during the initiation phase of the project, this proved to be a prudent approach.

The following risks have been mitigated:

- Theft: Fidelity Security has been contracted.
- Governance structure provides for the rotation of the position of chairperson and there are 3 signatories to the bank account.
- They have stopped the glass project until health and safety training is conducted and safety equipment and safety clothing are procured.

The management team each earns R 4 100.00 per month whilst the six temporary staff each earn R 1 000.00 per month.

Based on an approved project plan, the activities defined for the project were not fully executed due to safety concerns, relevant expertise and lack of relevant equipments.

### **2.2.1 Financial Report**

The approved NDA funding for the project was set at an amount of R1 075 600.00 with the beneficiaries making an own contribution over time of R535 000.00. The total amount contributed by the NDA was R540 600.00, with R50 000.00 reserved for project evaluation and R10 000.00 for branding. The payments made are tabulated in the table below.

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**Table 3: Tranches of NDA Funding to Project**

Item	Amount	%
<b>Total</b>	R 540 600.00	
<b>Reserved Amounts</b>	R 60 000.00	
<b>Transferred amount</b>	R 480 600.00	
<b>Tranche 1</b>	R 288 360.00	<b>60%</b>
<b>Tranche 2</b>	R 144 180.00	<b>30%</b>
<b>Tranche 3</b>	R 48 060.00	<b>10%</b>

All the tranches have been paid to date by the NDA. The Co-operative has not registered with SARS for tax purposes and they do not have an asset register.

During this evaluation only bank statements were provided as it was indicated that the financial information was submitted to the Auditors for audit purposes. The financial statements had not been drawn up. The 2012/2013 financial indicated a loss of R60 102.00.

### **2.3 Project results**

The project has resulted in the following:

- The project has not achieved the commitments set during the project proposal. These being:
  1. Establish collection points by securing collection bins at schools and shops;
  2. Providing employment for unemployed youth through various recruitment strategies and skills transfer;
  3. Establish a favourable pricing system to dominate current market and strengthen the project's cash flow;
  4. Attract local bakkie and truck load clients;
  5. Penetrate the market including expansion to towns such as Olifantshoek.
- The project has resulted in the employment of 10 direct beneficiaries and over 7000 indirect beneficiaries through the walk-ins trades. One beneficiary has since died and the team has to formulate a replacement or succession plan as there are not policies regarding this matter.
- The Co-operative is to develop and implement management policies which will assist in the effective running of the Co-operative.
- Training for the Co-operative included, governance, financial and project management. More training is needed in leadership and conflict management, Information technology and production management. This will serve as a basis for good decision making, improved product efficiency and possible increased profit.
- A large number of unemployed and social grant recipients augment their grants by collecting scrap metal and selling it to the Co-operative.

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- The project facilitated the purchase of the weigh bridge and office equipment in support of the project. Regular maintenance is however required as the bridge was non-operational during this evaluation.
  - The project has been registered as a co-operative and now has improved access to further developmental support. The Co-operative must formalise its business processes.
  - The current profit level when the truck is in good condition is in the order of R 30 000.00 per month. The Co-operative has a weak cash flow position, which makes them uncompetitive because as they are unable to afford to pay the prices that competitors pay.
  - The Co-operative relies on walk-in clients thus operate as a walk-in centre for scrap trade for local unemployed clients from surrounding communities.
  - Despite the concerns around fuel costs, occasionally, the truck will collect scrap from the townships and pay the locals for the scraps. In addition, there is a quarterly delivery of scrap to North West and Western Cape Provinces.
  - No updated statistics of the clients database, however, during 2011 the Co-operative had an estimated client footprint of 7096 individuals and women made a total of 2145 of the clientele.
  - Financial audits were done for 2012/2013 by Boshoff, however the 2013/2014 bank statements were only provided as the audits were still being conducted by the registered auditors.

## **2.4 Challenges facing the project**

There are various challenges facing the projects. The following are the key ones:

- Existing interpersonal strife amongst the management team;
- Theft challenges with casual staff;
- Cash flow is stifling the ability of the Co-operative to be competitive;
- Lack of management policies to mitigate employee relationship problems;
- Improved access to a greater market due to lack of a 32 ton truck;
- Delivery strategy that can leverage on fuel cost saving system;
- Lack of marketing strategy: a challenge for the Co-operative is ensuring adequate marketing and advertising of the projects;
- Inability to leverage funding resources through identifying and targeting funding organizations that provide funding specific to Co-operatives;
- Inability to implement glass project due to lack of equipment and safety concerns;
- Inability to grow the paper project due to un-serviced machinery for paper.

## **2.5 Project organisational capacity**

The Co-operative is well run despite interpersonal challenges and strained relations amongst directors. The project management office plays a pivotal role in the day to day operation, including sales from the walk-in clients, quarterly delivery of scraps and scheduling and sorting of scraps.

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The registered address of the Co-operative needs to be changed to reflect the current industrial area address as it is still registered under the CEO's home address.

The project management office is easily accessible to the Pabalelo community. Extensive use is made of mobile technologies such as cell phones, e-mails and short message service (SMS) for communicating. The project holds regular meetings to discuss operations and future plans.

All the beneficiaries have a good understanding of governance issues and basic financial management. There is a clear interest in the beneficiaries to improve operational performance. The project team provides strategic direction to the Co-operatives and provide regular progress reports to the NDA NC regional office. SEDA support has diminished since its personnel moved to another town.

The management team should develop and implement management policies to ensure compliance to labour legislation, particularly, health and safety training.

## **2.6 Effectiveness of the projects**

According to the recycling best practise, the project has been managed well and has proven to be effective due to the following reasons:

- The project promotes environmental care and sustainability

This Co-operative collects scraps that is polluting the environment and could be dangerous to the community such as lead, brazery, batteries, and iron plate. This has promoted re-use, removed these items from the immediate environment of the community and in turn provides the community a source of income.

- Alternative income source for the unemployed and grant recipients

The community of Siyanda District Municipality has an unemployment rate of 22.10%. The project has created 10 full time employments within the community, 4 of these are also founding member and board of directors. In the order of 7000 beneficiaries either directly or indirectly benefit from the business.

- Risk mitigation

The project has been operationalized and is run well despite challenges. Risks that materialised on the project implementation process have been mitigated, for example, the lack of big truck to transport scraps to other provinces has been mitigated by renting a 34 ton truck once a quarter, thus reducing the operational costs.

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- Marketing strategy

The project continuously markets the project at local community meeting, funerals and through word of mouth. They have previously listed the Co-operative in the Yellow Pages and have been advertised in the local newspaper. Improved marketing skills would allow the co-operatives to exploit their competitive advantage in terms of affordability and positioning to increase their market share and grow their businesses beyond the immediate area that surrounds Siyanda District Municipality, for example the limited or no signage to the Co-operative to encourage potential customers to be drawn to the sites. At the time of this evaluation visit the signage was not put up since it fell down last year.

- Skills development

The Board of Directors have in the process of the development of the projects been up-skilled in governance, financial management and project management. For the foreseeable future it would be prudent for the project beneficiaries to receive some training in operations management, IT and marketing. This would assist the projects in the following areas:

- Decision making on stock-holding levels of raw materials;
- Optimising production runs;
- Logistics decisions on delivery of products;
- Pricing of products.

## **2.7 Impact of the project**

The recycling project was fully operational but not enjoying diversified funding resource as it was registered as an NPO. Upon, registration as a Co-operative, the project has received funding and support from various government departments and private companies. There is a high level of accountability by the Board of Directors to maintain the project as a going concern.

During the visit, it was noted that there were interpersonal relational challenges which were affecting the daily operation on the project. Unavailable IT skills, as one of the directors had not been coming to work for 6 months and had poor and strained relation with other members. However, during our interview with the concerned member an intervention plan through project evaluation, motivation and encouragement was put in place and he has since returned to work and remained actively involved in the running of the project. The Co-operative driver was also not available as he had been fired after found stealing products. The project has had a positive impact in the community as the project has:

- Provided employment for 10 beneficiaries directly and support of at least over 700 people indirectly in the surrounding communities;
- Provided money to scraps freely collected by unemployed people and grant recipients;
- Provided a stimulus for others within the surrounding communities to assess whether they can develop projects of similar nature and create employment opportunities in the Upington.

- 
- Provides tip-off to the police through identifying and reporting stolen copper and other metals that belong to Telkom and Eskom.

The existing technologies used in all projects are simple, require low capital investment, yield reasonable returns and have a potential to employ a large number of community people creating a source of livelihood for the people in Siyanda District Municipality.

## **2.8 Project sustainability**

The recycling markets are well established throughout South Africa and the world. The long sustainability of the projects would largely depend on improved operational management of the projects and conflict resolution strategies. This project is volume driven businesses which requires commitment, regular work attendance, and proper supervision to mitigate theft in order to improve volume and improve profitability.

Optimising the value of input resources in such businesses has a direct correlation to profitability. The project is currently the most energy intensive in its operations during compression phase; the co-operative firstly needs to increase production volumes to improve utilisation of the assets, the compression machine and the weight bridge that needs maintenance. As they are currently renting the truck, weight-bridge, and compressor from their local competitors, the co-operative should consider the following to increase their market share:

- Using a slightly high cost pricing strategy, ensuring that the locals choose to use the Co-operative as partner of choice against other established recycling companies.
- Exploit other channels of scrap collection, for example, establish satellite office or collection points;
- Leverage the locality of the project and the current regulatory framework to access the supply chains of state owned facilities that are nearby, for example, prisons, army barracks, schools, municipalities and the like;
- Increase the range of scrap products.

Electricity is a significant cost driver in the running of the recycling. Besides looking at energy saving opportunities, the option of re-scheduling production times to be at non-Eskom peak times will reduce the input cost of the project. The project uses gas during compressing of certain scraps. It will be advisable to explore solar use as an alternative to electricity in the future given the environmental conditions in Northern Cape- based on the cost of the latter.

## **2.9 Project as a centre of development**

The existing recycling skills prior to the Co-operative registration have resulted in the projects being implemented well. The opportunity does exist for the projects to be supported and in the future to be centres of development for the community.

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Given the positive support received from SEDA, the Co-operative should consider providing training for the aspiring entrepreneur youth in the community. Registration with the Environmental SETA will be required to tap on more funding opportunities. This is the only recycling project founded and managed by BBBEEE and skills transfer could be provided in various languages dominant in the area.

Skills that need to be developed in the co-operatives are operations management and marketing to support the longer term sustainability of the project.

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## Section 2: Conclusions and Recommendations

### 1.1 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the above findings are:

- The projects has well-functioning administrative and management functions;
- Identifies and reports stolen copper and metal belonging to Eskom and Telkom to the police;
- The registration of the projects as Co-operative has taken place, and has allowed the project to access diversified funding resources;
- The Co-operative needs to change the current registered physical address to reflect the industrial address to avoid challenges on the location of the project;
- The diversification into scrap plastic, glass, and papers projects have not taken off the ground due to the lack of capabilities and safety issues relevant to these projects.
- The lack of a 32 ton truck transport for delivery of scrap has resulted in the project operating sub-optimally. In addition the cost of fuel has contributed in the Co-operative not collecting scrap from the local communities.
- The project has a developed an internal book keeping system which calculates the daily amount of scrap bought and sold, per type, and at what price.
- The project management office and the direct beneficiaries of the project have received training on governance, project management and financial management.
- Opportunities exist for Co-operative to increase production and grow its business by:
  - Reviving and developing the glass and plastic project effectively, considering safety issues and proper equipment.
  - Establishing collection points at schools and provide recycling and environmental education for learners.
  - Expanding the current target area of the co-operatives and explore the mining markets.
  - Exploiting opportunities that are presented by the government procurement process for the scraps sourced by the co-operatives.

The challenges that the Co-operative face are:

- Transportation: for both delivery and collection of scrap;
- Operations management skills: the co-operatives need to improve their operations management and marketing skills;
- Increasing input costs: for the more energy intensive the rising cost of electricity will be an increasing concern for the foreseeable future;
- The long term sustainability of the Co-operative would largely depend on how the management team/directors deals with above challenges but still expand their markets beyond Siyanda municipality.

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## 1.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and the conclusions drawn:

- The current management process has worked well but needs assistance in leadership and conflict resolution, training to mitigate the risks on project failure due to interpersonal strife. Interpersonal challenge is one of the key contributory sources of project failure amongst co-operatives. The project has experienced this and the learning gained from this experience must be transferred to the other aspiring entrepreneurs in the local communities, with emphasis on ethics, operational and business skills.
- The project has struggled with operational efficiency since the personnel from SEDA moved out of Uppington.
- Currently the Co-operative's biggest market is in the non-ferrous metals. The Co-operative currently has a market share of 15% in this product compared to their competitors OL Scrap and Walkers Midas who are sharing the market at 75% and 10% respectively. In order to improve their market share, the diversification of scrap products is necessary, training and equipment relevant to the plastic, paper and glass recycling should be done early in the project life-cycle to ensure that the project can be implemented in time and provide increase profit.
- Typical equipment still to be obtained by the Co-operative are:
  - More skip bins;
  - Truck for collections- this being a skip truck;
  - Drums and boxes for non-ferrous metals;
  - Small scale to weigh smaller items;
  - Grabber;
  - Baling machine;
  - Additional hand tools.
- In addition to leadership and conflicts resolution training, which is necessary for this Co-operative, the management team should be provided training in basic operations management, IT, marketing and new business development.
- The transport issue must be resolved through applying for a grant from Motsepe Foundation, SEFA or securing a loan from the bank. In addition the Co-operative can participate in the mentorship schemes that are currently being run by various government departments and agencies.
- Alternatively become involved with large companies as part of their BBBEE drives in terms of procurement and the like. For example various mines.
- In order to increase production, the project needs to exploit various delivery and collection channels, which may include:

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- Establish collection points;
  - Establishing satellite office in other municipalities or provinces where they could collect other goods and products on their quarterly delivery so that the truck does not return empty;
  - Procuring and securing government institutional clients to solicit more customers which could make the Co-operative the provider of choice in the community.
- The project should introduce resource efficiency and cost cutting measures into their businesses. The scheduling of production should be carefully reviewed to ensure that optimal use is made of the electricity tariffs and the energy availability during the compressing processes.
  - Assess the pricing of the scrap metal on-sold to the metal re-processors. Consideration should be given to what the current value of the scrap is as per international pricing guides.
  - The project should develop business plans that can be used for funding their businesses further in their growth phase. These can be submitted to SEFA, NDA, Khula Enterprises, Maphalane Disabled Children Trust. and other agencies that provide financing for small business enterprises;
  - The Co-operative should leverage its disabled members to improve their BBBEE status.
  - Keep a good record of Client base.

### **1.3 Lessons Learnt**

- Health and Safety is very important in a recycling business. The project functions in the absence of regular training in health and safety as well as labour policies. This opens the Co-operative to legislative risks.
- Conflicts and interpersonal relationship challenges are cited as the primary source of Co-operative failures. It is important to establish a very working relation and ensure regular training in leadership and conflict resolution training to ensure a conducive working environment. The training should be provided by NDA to ensure sustainability of similar projects in the future.
- Recycling business is a very lucrative business and the market is fully established in SA but it is highly competitive as is it draws on environmental and sustainability issues.
- Ensuring development of a business plan improves project funding, diversification and project growth thus good business knowledge is important.

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### Section 3: Sign-off of Report

The above report has been duly signed off by the following authorised representatives.

#### For Service Provider

*Dr. Tumi Jantjie*

*Service Provider Representative*

*Signature*

*25 June 2014*

*Date*

#### For National Development Agency

*Senior Manager: Monitoring and Evaluation*

*Signature*

*Date*

*Executive Director: Research and Development*

*Signature*

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